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ABSTRACT

A study examined 20 trade books (1964-1997) to evaluate their accuracy in depicting Native American peoples and cultures. The criteria embodied an authenticity guideline based upon the "Five Great Values": (1) generosity and sharing; (2) respect for elders and women; (3) getting along with nature; (4) individual freedom and leadership; and (5) courage. Results indicated that 60% of the books are at least satisfactory in their depictions but that bias and stereotyping still persist enough to recommend the use of the guideline as a tool to allow educators to confidently identify these problems in their instructional materials. Contains 3 tables of data, 15 references, and the Native Cultures Authenticity Guideline. (Author/BT)

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"Dangerous Indians": Evaluating the Depiction of Native Americans in Selected Trade Books

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Antonio R. Sanchez

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ABSTRACT

This study examined twenty trade books (1964-1997) to evaluate their accuracy in depicting Native American peoples and cultures. The criteria embodied an authenticity guideline based upon the Five Great Values with a rating scale between one (lowest) and five (highest). The results indicate that 60% of the books are at least satisfactory in their depictions but that bias and stereotyping still persist enough to recommend the use of the guideline as a tool to allow educators to confidently identify these problems in their instructional materials.

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As educators rise to the challenge of teaching accurate, quality content to their students about the diverse cultures spanning the American Experience, it is no secret that although the conventional textbook now features more multicultural representation than ever before, its accuracy of depiction is highly questionable (Loewen, 1995; Sanchez, 1999). Seeking a variety of supplemental sources to balance and correct this deficiency, many elementary and secondary educators utilize commercial trade books which have been shown to heighten social sensitivity, generate emotion, inspire critical thinking about the human condition, and provide a more accurate presentation of cultural nuances (Slapin and Seale, 1992; Koeller, 1996; Sanchez, 1997; Moore, 1999). This is especially true of Native Americans, perhaps the most frequently distorted and misconstrued group in popular/historical literature.

For decades, scholars have noted the large body of criticism on the frequently blatant presence of anti-Native-American bias in trade books (Barclay, 1996). This criticism is certainly warranted, for unchallenged distortions are perpetuated as truth, which, of course, spells disaster for the teaching and learning of, and empathy for, indigenous cultures. They are sometimes insultingly inaccurate in their depictions and the educator's dilemma becomes one of recognizing those inaccuracies. However, trade book images of Native Americans have "dramatically improved in terms of authenticity, accuracy, and objectivity" (Mathis, 1999, p.28), and their use in the classroom fits the assertion that trade books are not simply entertainment but are a potent teaching tool. Further, trade books are not always produced to reflect history, rather they "reflect our society, while at the same time reinforcing and perpetuating its racism" (Moore and Hirschfelder, 1977, p.2). The task must begin with a serious effort to learn and

understand Native cultures and use guidelines that have been developed to assist in the endeavor of evaluating instructional materials such as trade books (Slapin and Seale, 1992; Barclay, 1996; Sanchez, 1997). As Harvey (1999) notes:

> There is no better way to improve teaching about American Indians than by increasing one's own knowledge. Teachers armed with new and accurate knowledge about American Indian peoples and their diverse cultures are better able to select good instructional materials and reject those that are inadequate. Informed teachers will bring Indian people and their historical and contemporary perspectives into the classroom. They will challenge stereotypes with facts and generate respect for American Indian people and cultures (p.51).

Brophy (1999) warned that while trade books contain well-written narratives that are more interesting, engaging and well-suited to more effective learning, judicious use and caution must be exercised. The trade book may be problematic if it focuses upon trivial, contextual incidents that disregard the American Indian perspective. An excessive reliance on "stories" created by authors unfamiliar with Native cultures can lead to children gaining romanticized perspectives, especially if the story is fictionalized or historically inaccurate. Finally, Brophy argues that such sources, even when accurate, should include the "authentic" point of view written by a Native author. Brophy underscores the power of the trade book that is historically and culturally accurate, and further urges the educator to find those accurate sources. But studies indicate that our textbooks and trade books are not always so, and suffer from distortion, tokenism, overrepresentation, romanticized portrayals, and omission (Sanchez, 1999). It thus

becomes a question of how educators can validate accuracy while expanding their knowledge base.

But judging the accuracy of cultural content is further complicated when one considers an inherent danger of utilizing a guideline. Barclay (1996) calls it the "checklist mentality" in which one condemns a book automatically for any stereotype violation. The resultant danger is failing to consider whether or not the book blatantly perpetuates a myth or culturally harmful idea of Native Americans. Interestingly, Barclay further contends that some stereotypes cannot be avoided, such as too many Navajos living in poverty, a fact as well as an archetype. Additionally, one's perception of a stereotype can be another's cultural virtue, such as contemporary Native Americans living without the material or creature comforts of modern society. One may view this as a negative stereotype while another may view it as Native rejection of Anglo materialism. Much is dependent upon the guideline being utilized and the way it is perceived.

In attempting to evaluate cultural materials, good intentions are not enough. Slapin and Seale (1992) note that countless books stand as a testament that "non-Indian writers have created an image of American Indians that has little value... [and] does not take into account the rich diversity of cultures that did, and does, exist" (p 84).

A guideline is necessary for the non-Native educator for one simple but profound reason: What students read or have read to them by their teachers does affect them. This was evident enough to those involved in the civil rights movement in the sixties to result in a steady but slow improvement in the trade book depictions of African-Americans (Slapin and Seale, 1992). But little was apparently done for Native peoples as the perceived threat to impose writing guidelines did not evidently materialize for them.

The authenticity guideline presented here is based upon the Five Great Values first proposed by Reiten (1995), later refined by this author, and previously utilized to assess the depiction of Native cultures in American history textbooks (Sanchez, 1999). The Values include: generosity and sharing; respect for elders and women; getting along with nature; individual freedom and leadership; and courage (1).

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

The guideline has its roots in similar statement or question guidelines offered by Barclay (1996), Caldwell-Mitten and Wood (1990), and the work by Slapin and Seale (1992). The model is applicable to the major Native cultures but should in no way be construed as implying that Native cultures are uniform or to promote a "Noble Savage" image. Indeed, this image of the Native American is often profusely helpful to the Anglo culture at the expense of Indian culture. Still, the various subtopics within each Value are intended to convey that many shared facets can be identified between and among cultures. However, research also reveals unique variances of certain traditions and practices from tribe to tribe and culture to culture. In addition, because some cultures deem it necessary to conceal the nature of some practices, depictions may not always be entirely accurate while to Native American beliefs they are authentic representations of cultural practices. To be sure, Native cultures vary significantly from each other in some respects; this model anchors the common facets identified in earlier research as a guideline for educators who hope to explore Native American cultures in authentic presentations.

This paper presents an evaluation guideline that can help the educator assess accuracy by using common Native American values and traditions of representative

Native cultures. It examines twenty trade books, evaluating their accuracy in depicting Native Americans and their cultures. Table 2 indicates book titles, authors, publishers, and copyright dates. The trade books were selected from the library of the Ackerman Center for Democratic Citizenship at Purdue University where a collection of approximately two hundred trade books is housed. The copyrights of the sample books range from 1964 to 1997 and are or have been utilized as varied interpretations of American Indians in the elementary and secondary programs for teacher education.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

Two of the books (*Indian Chiefs* (Freedman, 1987) and *The Tlingit* (Osinski, 1990) are classified as nonfiction. Three of the books (*The Trees Stand Shining* (Jones, 1971), *Giving Thanks* (Swamp, 1995), and *The Huron Carol* (Tyrrell, 1990) can be classified as poetry or songs. Three of the books (*Many Nations* (Bruchac, 1997), Farquhar's (1964) *Indian Children of America* (Farquhar, 1964), and *Ten Little Indians* (Grossman and Long, 1991) can be categorized as informational children's books. Four of the books (*Knots on a Counting Rope* (Martin and Archambault, 1987), *Annie and the Old One* (Miles, 1971), *Brave as a Mountain Lion* (Scott, 1996), and *A Walk to the Great Mystery* (Stroud, 1995) are contemporary story books. The remaining eight books are renditions of Native folktales or legends.

Each trade book was read and examined for depictions and descriptions of Native peoples based upon the various subcategories of the authenticity guideline. The numerous subcategories were also used to determine accuracy in drawings or photos, language, stereotyping, lifestyle, gender roles, and distortions and/or omissions in order to ascertain if a trade book is widely accurate, partly accurate, or totally inaccurate. None of the

books can be expected to utilize all or even most of the Values' numerous subcategories, rather, an accurate accounting of those items and the book's focus in portraying an authentic and multidimensional perspective of the Native Experience based on the categories represented in the book examined. No Value or subcategory carried more weight than others, the objective being to determine if a book accurately conveyed a range of traits that spanned the Values.

Each trade book has been assigned a rating between zero (blatantly inaccurate, stereotypic, and/or culturally insulting) and five (numerous and accurate depictions spanning at least four of the five Values, resulting in a truly multidimensional portrayal). A rating of three designated an average/satisfactory depiction in at least three of the Value/headings. A rating of four denoted a "good" evaluation in three to four of the headings. A rating of two or one resulted in a "lower-rated" or poor designation in one or two of the headings.

Table 3 indicates the final ratings of the evaluation. Five of the trade books rated a 5, indicative of a consistently accurate presentation of Native cultures and individuals. One of these, *The Tlingit* (Osinski, 1990), is a nonfiction entry. Three of the books received a 4. *Indian Chiefs* (Freedman, 1987) was the sole nonfiction representative in this group. Generally, nonfiction writers do considerable research prior to writing and, therefore, present Native cultures in more honest, non-stereotypic ways. Four of the books rated a generally satisfactory 3. A book of Native poems, *The Trees Stand Shining* (Jones, 1971) was among this group. Five of the books were rated a less than satisfactory 2, based upon sketchy or inaccurate depictions. Three of these featured Native legends as the focus and also included the oldest entry in the sample, *Indian Children of America*

(Farquhar, 1964). One trade book rated a 1 and the remaining two rated 0. These latter three suffered from serious distortion, stereotyping, and/or cultural insult.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Two initial observations can be noted. First, one of the great benefits of using trade books effectively may be the opportunity to learn an ethnic/cultural perspective as conveyed by an ethnic author. Though there is certainly no guarantee, such "authentic" perspectives are generally more culturally accurate due to "inside knowledge" and may further promote the development and maintenance of cultural empathy in non-Natives (Brophy, 1999). Slapin's and Seale's (1992) adamant claim that "only American Indians can tell non-Indians what it is to be Indian" (p.87) and that there is no further need for non-Native writers to "interpret" Native cultures for public consumption may have great relevance. However, this evaluation indicates that non-Native writers can also successfully depict Native Americans. As best as can be determined, only five of the authors in the sample are identified as Native Americans (Bruchac, Osinski, Ross, Stroud, and Swamp). Tellingly, perhaps, their respective books are classified in the average-to-highest-rated categories. However, it may be prudent not to overemphasize this factor since the ethnicity of all of the authors is not known. Indeed, of the remaining seventeen authors (two of the books featured multiple authors), ten were identified as non-Native American (including a British, French, and early immigrant author) but seven were not identified one way or the other, and could possibly be Native. Based on the high rankings of known Native American authors and their presentations, the advantage of the Native author seems apparent. Slapin and Seale (1992) poignantly note that "in fact, Indians are the only Americans whose history has been set down almost exclusively by

those who are not members of the group about which they are writing" (p.10). Further, they contend that few Native writers and illustrators are published in the mainstream press. Perhaps this accounts for an at best passing or commonly distorted knowledge of true Native peoples and their cultures. But this assertion may not hold up when one considers that until most recently most depictions of Asians and Hispanics in America and of slavery have been penned by Anglos.

Second, illustrations and photos are the cornerstone for a trade book's effectiveness and impact next to culturally and historically accurate content. Indeed, illustrations and photos must also serve the purpose of conveying accuracy as well as promote a story line. In this sample, seventeen of the books contain hand-drawn illustrations. One of the books, (*The Tlingit* (Osinski, 1990) is illustrated solely with photos and two others (*Turquoise Boy* (Cohlene, 1990) and *Indian Chiefs* (Freedman, 1987) rely on a combination of photos and drawings. Tunnell (1993) has noted that in the past two decades, the phenomenal growth in trade books is due in no small measure to being better illustrated than ever before, although he does not formally state his standards. While only a few of the books in this sample precede his assertion, it can easily be concluded that these books are colorfully illustrated.

But while they may be generally described as colorful, appealing, and accurate, there are some exceptions. As might be expected, the oldest book in the sample, *Indian Children of America* (Farquhar, 1964) is laced with numerous illustrations that tend to promote the stereotypes of braided hair and similar attire, even though this beginner's book purports to illustrate four different Native cultures. Although it is not known what was available at that time, it is basically this factor that contributes to its less than

satisfactory rating. Similarly rated, *How the Stars Fell into the Sky* (Oughton, 1992) is a retelling of a Navajo legend but its illustrations, colorful as they are, border on stereotypic caricatures which display no emotion.

In a different vein is the average-rated *The Trees Stand Shining* (Jones, 1971). This book of thirty-two song poems requires considerable background knowledge in order to interpret meaning and assess accuracy. As such, it should rely heavily upon its colorful illustrations to assist in those interpretations. Each illustration, which is actually an impressionistic painting, provides a brilliant visual to the respective set of poems it represents.

The two lowest-rated books in the sample (*The Huron Carol* (Tyrrell, 1990) and *Ten Little Rabbits* (Grossman and Long, 1991) owe part of their problems to their illustrations. *The Huron Carol* is a nicely illustrated trade book. Unfortunately, it is a stereotyped portrayal of the Christmas Story envisioned over three hundred years ago by a French missionary but set in the Huron culture, an event that contradicts Huron beliefs. In essence, the message of the story surmises that it is the Huron culture that must respect the Christian belief and it must not have one of its own. Worse, the illustrations promote a narrow, stereotyped range of physical features, headbands, and feathers.

Ten Little Rabbits is intended to be a counting book for primary students, but while it may have the proverbial good intentions of highlighting some aspect of Native culture with each number, it quickly dissolves into a cultural insult. The colorful illustrations are completely negated because rabbits are depicted as Indians engaging in Native activities, some of which additionally enhance stereotyping, i.e., rain dance, smoke signals, and tipis.

The First Great Value/Heading: Generosity and Sharing

The six subcategories under this heading convey the selfless and giving nature of Native peoples who shared the sacred bounty of Mother Earth and further encouraged individual talents as well as group cohesion. But the core of this Value is the aspect of selfless giving and the sharing of oneself.

Fully half of the twenty trade books in the sample clearly related this notion. All eight of the higher-rated (4-5) books and one average-rated book best exemplify the Value. This latter book, *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* (de Paola, 1983), is among the better examples. It retells the Comanche legend of a little girl named She-Who-Is-Alone who willingly sacrifices her only possession, a doll, to the ceremonial fires in an attempt to save her people from the punishing effects of famine. The Great Spirit sends the bluebonnet flower as a sign of forgiveness, ends the famine, and bestows her with a new name, One-Who-Dearly-Loved-Her-People. The popular but badly flawed *Knots on a Counting Rope* (Martin and Archambault, 1987) conveys another dimension to the Value in which the grandfather selflessly takes care of his blind grandson. The lower-rated *The Story of Jumping Mouse* (Steptoe, 1984) is identified as a retelling of a Native legend, but nowhere in the text is it actually delineated as such, a factor that contributes to its low rating. This is unfortunate, because it relates an interesting story of an unselfish spirit.

The historical and well-written *Indian Chiefs* (Freedman, 1987) is an excellent real-life example of this Value. The book relates the insightful biographies of six Plains chiefs who led their people during the tumultuous era of the Indian Wars. They include Red Cloud, Satanta, Quanah Parker, Washakie, Joseph, and Sitting Bull. Their stories

crisply not how the effective leadership of each was based upon his willingness to share and sacrifice.

The five top-rated books are perhaps the definitive examples of giving and sharing. The best of these is *A Walk to the Great Mystery* (Stroud, 1995), a contemporary story of a Cherokee medicine woman who shares with her grandchildren the sacred interconnectedness of life around them and within them. It serves as a fine non-threatening approach to values education.

The Second Great Value/Heading: Respect for the Elderly and Women

The valued status of elders is an important foundation in Native cultures. They represent not only a vital link to the past, but more importantly the role models of wisdom to be taught to the younger (Sanchez, 1997). Not surprisingly, the eight lower-rated (0-2) books do not portray this Value with two interesting exceptions. The ancient *Indian Children of America* (Farquhar, 1964) does indeed relate that youth learns from elders, but then virtually negates the endeavor by citing that they "learn to be good Indians" (p.2).

One of the essences of respect for elders is the notion that they are never to be interrupted (Sanchez, 1997). This is the weakest point in *Knots on a Counting Rope* (Martin and Archambault, 1987) where the grandson is constantly interrupting the grandfather's storytelling.

More appropriate examples of respecting and learning the wisdom of elders appear in the average-rated books (Bruchac, 1997 and Ross, 1996) and take solid form in the higher-rated entries. But yet again it is with the five highest-rated books that the

Value is best depicted, especially *Brave as a Mountain Lion* (Scott, 1996) and the superbly written *A Walk to the Great Mystery* (Stroud, 1995).

Another aspect of this Value deals with appropriate gender roles, namely the revered and respected role of women in a noncondescending manner that goes beyond the conventional portrayal of mother and subservient wife (Sanchez, 1997). In addition to the almost-expected better examples in the highest-rated set (especially *Turquoise Boy* (Cohlene, 1990), *The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend* (Schecter, 1992), and *A Walk to the Great Mystery* (Stroud, 1995), good examples can be found in *Annie and the Old One* (Miles, 1971) and *The Legend of the Windigo* (Ross, 1996). The latter, however, must be carefully examined. It is a purported folktale that is essentially the author's creation though it is a mosaic from several cultures' legends. It does depict women in a respectful manner, but the depiction is deftly buried within the adventurous aspects of the tale. Generally, however, these books portray gender roles in a balance of duties and responsibilities without stereotypes.

The Third Great Value/Heading: Getting Along With Nature

This Value represents not only the largest heading but also the most misconstrued. Its fifteen subcategories imply initially an ecological reverence but expand to include spirituality and ceremony, garb, artifacts, dwellings, and recognition of humanness. One of the frequent mistakes of evaluating for environmental respect is the common misconception that Native Americans were compulsively ecological (Sanchez, 1997). Somewhat surprisingly, none of the books in this sample convey such a misconception, even in the older books where one might expect to find it. This includes the several

books whose subjects do not directly focus upon this aspect, such as the three lowest-rated entries whose ratings were not influenced by it.

There are exemplary examples of nature's harmony commanding respect. This can be most directly seen in *A Walk to the Great Mystery* (Stroud, 1995) in which Grandma Ann's medicine bundle of tools from the earth helps prove to her grandchildren that all of life's powers come from the earth's loving heart. Many of the poems in *The Trees Stand Shining* (Jones, 1971) poignantly reflect Native sensitivity and respect for the harmony of the natural world. The most reverent example is found in *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message* (Swamp, 1995), which is an inspirational message of the Six Nations teaching peace and appreciation of Mother Earth. As it begins with "Mother Earth, we thank you for giving us everything we need" (p.2), the reader is reverently reminded of the beauty and spirit of the environment and the deep spiritual relationship between the land and humankind.

Spirituality and ceremonial ritual are certainly cornerstones of Native cultures, both yesterday and today (Sanchez, 1997). In general, most of the books in this sample depict these aspects most respectfully and in some instances in the context of specific cultures, such as rituals practiced by the Comanche (the shaman in *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* (de Paola, 1983), Hopi (*The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend* (Schecter, 1992), and Navajo (the Holy Ones in *Turquoise Boy* (Cohlene, 1990) and, to a small extent, *Annie and the Old One* (Miles, 1971). The eight top-rated trade books, not surprisingly, are good examples of this respect.

However, *Indian Children of America* (Farquhar, 1964) is sketchy or neutral at best in its depictions of spirituality and ceremony. Ceremonies are in fact referred to as

festivals, giving the impression that they are merely parties. Spiritual entities are depicted rather negatively, with one specific reference to their use as punishment for children. One might take into account the age of the book and its targeted audience of younger readers, but despite its several good points, more depth in this regard might have merited its continual and effective use.

A spiritual base should certainly be expected in the eight trade books that relate Native legends or folktales. Generally, this is indeed the case although the books vary in their depth of presenting this aspect of Native cultures. For example, there is deep spiritual meaning in *Turquoise Boy* (Cohlene, 1990) and the darkly-illustrated *Where the Buffaloes Begin* (Baker, 1981) in contrast to the short and straight-forward *How the Stars Fell into the Sky* (Oughton, 1992) and the scary *The Legend of the Windigo* (Ross, 1996). *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* (Goble, 1978) and *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* (de Paola, 1983) have an educating mysticism to them, while *The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend* (Schecter, 1992) does not read like a spiritual legend at all but rather an adventurous story of courage. Interestingly, these latter three books prominently feature a heroine, which adds a refreshing balance to gender and spirituality. As previously mentioned, *The Story of Jumping Mouse* (Steptoe, 1984) is an otherwise good example of a spiritual legend, but it needs a more defined link to Native culture in that it is not formally identified with a particular tribe or culture.

A most important point is in order pertaining to Native folktales and legends. More than 400 oral traditions have yielded literally tens of thousands of Native tales. But most of the written versions, many of which are still very much alive in oral traditions, are mistranslated, incomplete, or inaccurate (Slapin and Seale, 1992). This makes their

renditions harmful and disrespectful to Native peoples, which should be a crucial consideration for the educator who uses folktales and legends as a primary tool to relate cultural truths.

The two lowest-rated books represent serious flaws in their renditions of spirituality and ceremony. *Ten Little Rabbits* (Grossman and Long, 1991) attempts to depict two examples of spiritual ceremonies, but the essence is not explained until the end of the book (where it might easily be missed) and is lost by all accounts by the insulting "cuteness" of rabbits dressed as Native Americans. *The Huron Carol* (Tyrrell, 1990) is perhaps worse. The story reputably aims to promote respect for differing cultural beliefs through a promise of hope in new birth: the birth of Jesus. Instead, the reader comes away with the false belief that the Huron culture is not only Christian, but substitutes Native angels, wisemen, and the Madonna in place of conventional portrayals.

One of the most consistent sources of distortion has been that of authentic dwellings, garb and artifacts (Sanchez, 1999). Poorer books, of course, leave the reader to conclude that all Native peoples lived in tipis, wore feathers, frayed buckskin and breechcloths, and smoked "peace pipes." Generally, these books accurately depict the variety of cultural dwellings, including Hopi pueblos (Schecter, 1992), Navajo hogans (Cohlene, 1990; Miles, 1971; and Oughton, 1992), Plains tipis (Freedman, 1987; de Paola, 1983; and Goble, 1978), and contemporary structures (Osinski, 1990; Scott, 1996; and Stroud, 1995). The "variety" books by Bruchac (1997) and Farquhar (1964) also depict a culturally accurate range of dwellings.

Native garb specified and authentic in relation to the various cultures is also quite accurate. Chief among these are the Navajo garb in *Turquoise Boy* (Cohlene, 1990),

Hopi attire in *The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend* (Schecter, 1992), and the various Plains garb in *Indian Chiefs* (Freedman, 1987). Stereotype garb, however, is a shortcoming in *Indian Children of America* (Farquhar, 1964), which is otherwise and surprisingly (for its age) accurate in several respects. Inaccurate Navajo garb is also a weak point in *Annie and the Old One* (Miles, 1971). The poorly-rated *The Huron Carol* (Tyrrell, 1990) perpetuates the frayed buckskin and breechcloth stereotype, while *Ten Little Rabbits* (Grossman and Long, 1991) features "altered" costume design in order to accommodate the cotton tails of rabbits.

The lack of a contemporary depiction is an oft-heard complaint in trade books. Among the eight higher-rated books, two depict Native Americans dressed in contemporary mainstream garb: *Brave as a Mountain Lion* (Scott, 1995), and *A Walk to the Great Mystery* (Stroud, 1996). With the possible addition of the flawed *Knots on a Counting Rope* (Martin and Archambault, 1987), these modern depictions help dispel the notion that Native peoples are "dead" cultures of the past.

The accurate depiction of cultural artifacts is another facet that has improved in several of the trade books. The proper roles of jewelry, sand paintings, tobacco, totems, masks, and wooden canoes, among others, are specific to selected Native cultures. The origins and purposes of these are both subtly and directly presented in the books by Bruchac (1997), Cohlene (1990), Miles (1971), Osinski (1990), and Stroud (1995), but as with many aspects of Native culture, one must have the necessary background knowledge to identify them as accurate.

One of the most serious charges aimed at the depiction of Native peoples is the lack of recognition of their humanness, i.e., laughing, playing games, enjoying life in

general. Lack of same has promoted the stereotype of the always-serious and stoic Native American. It also represents the greatest shortcoming of the books in this sample. Only three of the trade books depict a smiling or laughing Native: *Indian Children of America* (Farquhar, 1964) (which refreshingly presents laughter as the most frequently depicted emotion), *The Tlingit* (Osinski, 1990), and *Brave as a Mountain Lion* (Scott, 1996). Three additional books had a similar opportunity, but strangely their illustrations depict their Native characters without mouths, thus negating emotional identification: *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses* (Goble, 1978), *How the Stars Fell into the Sky* (Oughton, 1992), and *A Walk to the Great Mystery* (Stroud, 1995).

The Fourth Great Value/Heading: Individual Freedom and Leadership

The true essence underlying this Value is not so much freedom as it is leadership and responsibility. The concept of Native leadership, however, is far more complicated than the simplistic perspective offered in the authenticity guideline. The differences in political organization among the varied cultures is in some respects immense and represent much greater differences than between, for example, a republic and a monarchy (Sanchez, 1999). This guideline, however, focuses upon the true power of a tribe resting with a Tribal Council instead of the media-promoted stereotype of a single, all-powerful chief. In addition, many of these councils were controlled by women, a role that further signified the great respect with which they held.

The perspective of the chief's role is best explained in *Indian Chiefs* (Freedman, 1987) in which the complexity of Indian society "distinguished among many levels and degrees of leadership" (p.8). Small bands and large tribes alike had several chiefs to respectively lead their people in war, peace, hunting, negotiation, ceremonies, etc.

Principal chiefs were ranked first among equals, but they always shared their authority with the Tribal Council and other chiefs, and could advise but not command. With this explanation as its preface, *Indian Chiefs* devotes its focus to six Plains war chiefs who "were called upon to lead their people at a time of crisis" (p.9). Each of them had to meet the challenge in his own way, but without the informational preface, a reader could easily conclude that the war chief was the supreme and sole role of tribe's leader. None of the other books in this sample, however, even made reference to a chief.

The depiction of a Tribal Council is another aspect that only one of the books focuses upon. In *The Legend of the Windigo* (Ross, 1996), the Tribal Council, which is clearly represented by several females, comes together to decide that the tribe's elders must seek the guidance of the spirit protectors in order to defeat the dreaded Windigo.

The acceptance of personal responsibility is a most important aspect of this Value. It is certainly clearly depicted by the six chiefs in *Indian Chiefs* (Freedman, 1987) as a requisite for the role of leadership. But it extends equally to the commoner who must not only accept responsibility but also the consequences for actions involved. Several of the trade books use this aspect as a highlight. In *Brave as a Mountain Lion* (Scott, 1996), Spider struggles with stage fright in the upcoming spelling bee, but he triumphs after being advised that bravery is a responsibility passed down by his Shoshoni ancestors, if he chooses to accept it. Similarly, Huh-ay-ay demonstrates her responsible nature by saving her peaceful pueblo from Apache raiders in *The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend* (Schecter, 1992). In *Where the Buffaloes Begin* (Baker, 1981), Little Wolf overcomes his great fear and calls forth and leads the buffaloes to trample his people's attacking enemies. Responsibility for one's people is also the focus in *Turquoise Boy* (Cohlene,

1990) where a young Navajo takes it upon himself to seek out something that will make his people's lives easier. This is also the theme in *The Legend of the Bluebonnet* (de Paola, 1983) in which She-Who-Is-Alone responsibly makes a great personal sacrifice to save her Comanche people from a drought. In *Annie and the Old One* (Miles, 1971), Annie must face the consequences for her mischief in trying to hold back time to save her grandmother and ultimately becomes responsible for taking up the weaving stick (although strangely the story's adults pay scant attention to Annie's deeds).

The Fifth Great Value/Heading: Courage

This concept has much wider connotations than the initial implication of fighting and battle. In point of fact, in only two of the books, *Where the Buffaloes Begin* (Baker, 1981) and *The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend* (Schecter, 1992), are Native Americans actually fighting and even then violent depiction is totally avoided. The former book owes its lower rating to its stereotyped references to killing, enemies, creeping, and cruelty. Rather, courage is classically symbolic of the interrelatedness of life and the other Values. Courage to Native peoples is a matter of giving and sharing for the benefit and protection of family, group, or tribe. It is a matter of overcoming fear and responsibly showing reverence for life and Mother Earth. It is a matter of freely choosing to do the right thing. In this light, the seven trade books mentioned in the previous paragraph are also examples of this courage. The characters responsibly demonstrate great courage in overcoming fear and obstacles in their respective quests.

In a modern context, courage can be equated with patriotism. Serving in the military is still considered a major way to benefit and protect one's people. The only reference to this, however, is in the historical appendix of *Turquoise Boy* (Cohlene, 1990)

in which a three-sentence paragraph briefly mentions the Navajo code-talkers of World War II.

But today the perspective of courage stresses that one must take the risk of a courageous action that will benefit one's people as well as oneself. Non-Native Americans find this perspective especially difficult to understand due to the stigma attached to failure. To Native peoples, however, failure only presents the opportunity to again attempt success. This lesson is probably best exemplified by Spider in *Brave as a Mountain Lion* (Schecter, 1992). It took great courage for Spider to risk not only standing on the stage for the spelling bee, but also the pressure of failing in front of his family and friends. Though he finishes second, he actually wins a greater success: the pride of his family.

Summary and Conclusions

This article examined twenty trade books which were chosen from Purdue University's Ackerman Center for Democratic Citizenship in order to evaluate their accuracy in the depiction of Native peoples and cultures. The criteria were based upon an authenticity guideline established by the Five Great Values and their various subcategories. The guideline should not be construed as implying uniformity among Native cultures but rather their common facets. The Values/headings included generosity and sharing; respect for the elders and women; getting along with nature; individual freedom and leadership; and courage. The guideline utilized an evaluation scale between zero (lowest) and five (highest). The ratings are noted in Table 3.

The higher-rated books featured accurate depictions of elements found in four or five of the headings, while the average-rated books contained accurate depictions in at

least three of the headings. The lower-rated books featured accurate depictions in two or one of the headings and further perpetuated blatant stereotypes and other culturally insulting elements. Of the books' twenty-two authors, five were identified as Native Americans, ten were non-Native and seven could not be identified one way or the other. All of the trade books in the sample contain numerous illustrations and/or photos. The ratings indicate that five of the books rated 5, three were rated 4, four were rated 3, five were rated two, one rated one and two rated zero.

Generally, the evaluations indicate that the majority (12, or 60%) of the books are at least satisfactory in their depictions of Native peoples and cultures. Eight of the thirteen rated 4-5, indicating an accurate presentation covering a range of aspects in four or five of the Value/headings. One might initially surmise that the higher rate of accuracy is a reflection of the era's heightened sensitivity to multiculturalism (Sanchez, 1999) by noting that the five highest-rated books all have post-1990 copyrights. But the stance lacks credibility when one further notes that three of the seven lower-rated books, including the two lowest-rated, also have post-1990 copyrights. Thus, recent and award-winning books are not necessarily accurate or culturally sensitive. A future study evaluating only post-1990 trade books might be in order, but the author supposes that recent copyrights alone do not account for accuracy. Rather, it is a matter of a knowledgeable author who is sensitive to the specific culture about which he/she is writing.

Another stance that cannot be taken from this sample is that the increased number of accurate trade books is due to true Native authors conveying the Native perspective. While it is true that five of the top twelve books were written by Native authors, they

were the only five in the sample and the remaining authors are majority non-Natives or unidentified. Advantageous as Native authors may be to accuracy, three of the five highest-rated books are authored by non-Natives.

The evaluation of Native American trade books for cultural accuracy is certainly not a recent idea. Challenging bias, racism, and stereotyped depictions has been a critical mission for thirty years (Barclay, 1996). Barclay further asserted that the preponderance of criticism was certainly necessary, as attested to by many who utilize Native trade books. Interestingly, however, Barclay's look at pre-1970 books noted not only the expected large number of blatantly racist books but also a fair number that are still of great practical use today. In spite of guidelines such as the one offered in this article, he maintains that an identified stereotype should not always constitute the book's automatic condemnation, but only if it does not seriously perpetuate a negative stereotyped image of Native peoples. Such a book can still be a "good" one in that it may be the rare book that is "perfectly free from stereotypes and absolutely free from racism" (p.565). Though these "imperfect" books may serve to counter other numerous stereotypes as well, one must definitely note that they generally and carefully avoid the stereotype of violence, which is also a point made earlier concerning this sample. This may be especially important to consider in this era of media-promoted violence.

A strong implication of Barclay's work is that good, older books "are still worth reading" (p.565). This author agrees, and would include an addendum to the obvious inclusion of good, "newer" books. Contrary to beliefs that not using ANY book is preferable to using a distorted one, educators can also use "bad" books but only as tools to counter the misconceptions they promote. In order to do this, of course, educators

must first be cognizant of the cultures they depict. This is the point behind this article. Not only evaluating a sample of Native American trade books, but more importantly providing educators with a tool to evaluate their own materials.

This author does not believe that the small sample of trade books evaluated in this article will completely reverse the widespread bias problem, but hopefully it will serve as a positive step in that direction. Being able to find reliably reviewed trade books is not as simple as it sounds because most reviews have a literary angle or a children's literature perspective (Caldwell-Wood and Mitten, 1991). But with a guideline at hand, educators may confidently identify even subtle stereotypes, distortions, and inaccuracies that are still commonly held (Brophy, 1999) and openly depicted in instructional materials. Reliably accurate trade books could thus continue to complement the curriculum (Egan, 1988) by fostering knowledgeable understanding and empathy for the Native American Experience.

Notes

1. Content/construct validity for the guideline was established by Dr. Gayle Reiten, who first introduced me to a draft of the Values through her mentor and friend, Art Raymond, Director of Indian Program Development and Instructor of Native American history at the University of North Dakota. Dr. Raymond used the framework of the Values in his teaching. The origins of the Five Great Values are based upon the work of Dr. John F. Bryde in a now out-of-print book entitled *Modern Indian Psychology* (1971, Institute of Indian Studies: University of South Dakota Press). Dr. Reiten has successfully utilized my revised guideline in her capacity as an administrator in a BIA school in New Mexico. In order to establish interscorer reliability, a detailed presentation of the Values and their numerous subcategories was made to fifteen elementary educators at Purdue University's Teachers Encouraging a Love of Literature (TELL) Conference on March 1, 1997. Each educator was asked to utilize the guideline to evaluate five trade books about Native Americans. A forum comparing the results indicated the guideline produced consistent evaluations for all of the books by all fifteen of the educators. Similar presentations were made by the author at the Indiana Council for the Social Studies in Indianapolis, IN, on March 14, 1997 and also to an entire elementary school faculty on April 25, 1997. Educators at these presentations were also asked to evaluate trade books and the results were similar to and verified those of TELL. The author is grateful to these educators for their participation and also to Professor Jill May, an expert in children's

literature, who has published Native American pieces and graciously reviewed this manuscript.

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Table 1-The Native Cultures Authenticity Guideline

The First Great Value: GENEROSITY AND SHARING

1. Are the many bounties of Mother Earth shared?
2. Do the Native American characters share their personal possessions?
3. Do they give/share selflessly and freely for the benefit of others?
4. Are they presented as uniquely separate individuals as well as members of the group?
5. Are they encouraged by family, friends, tribe, etc., to develop and share their talents for the benefit of others?
6. Are children portrayed as "being taken care of" by family, relatives and non-relatives?

The Second Great Value: RESPECT FOR THE ELDERLY AND WOMEN

1. Are male/female elders shown proper respect for their wisdom?
2. Are elders portrayed as appropriate role models with whom the younger can identify?
3. Are the younger depicted learning from the elders, especially through storytelling?
4. Are elders portrayed speaking to the younger without interruption?
5. Are women depicted as integral and important, instead of detached and subservient mothers and wives?

The Third Great Value: GETTING ALONG WITH NATURE

1. Are Native Americans depicted respecting the sacred natural harmony of and with nature without the stereotype of being "compulsively ecological?"
2. Is it properly depicted that the land was forcibly taken away from them?
3. Is the humanness of Native Americans recognized, i.e., laughing, playing games, enjoying life with family and friends, the extended family unit teaching love and responsibility, etc.?
4. Is a language of respect utilized, i.e., avoidance of offensive and stereotypic terminology?
5. Are they portrayed as speaking "broken" English?
6. Are there references to entities possessing a spirit or power to be respected?
7. Is spirituality respectfully portrayed, or is it referred to as superstitious, meaningless, or trivialized ceremonies, dances, songs, or "war whoops?"
8. Are they depicted with a wide range of physical features, avoiding the "Red Man in braids" stereotype?
9. Are they dressed in authentic garb, or are they all wearing feathers and breechcloths regardless of the culture?
10. Are they dressed in modern mainstream garb, depending upon the setting?
11. Do they have stereotyped surnames or authentic translations, including "European" names?

12. Are ceremonial artifacts correctly depicted and explained, such as fetishes, medicine bundles, the wearing of turquoise and silver, the medicine pipe (not "peace pipe), sand paintings, etc.
13. Are they portrayed eating a variety of foods and using utensils or just their hands?
14. Is accurate information provided about dwellings (hogans, long houses, tipis, wickiups, wigwams, etc.), duties of adults and children, ceremonies (the Sun Dance, the Green Corn Dance, the Mixed Kachina Dance, etc.) and practices (the passage to adulthood, healing ceremonies, etc.)?
15. Are they portrayed as contemporary people and not a past people who vanished and no longer exist?

The Fourth Great Value: INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND LEADERSHIP

1. Are Native Americans portrayed as freely choosing an action for the benefit of others?
2. Are they depicted accepting responsibility for the consequences of a chosen action or decision?
3. Is the leadership of the tribe properly depicted via the power of the Tribal Council (and the important role that women usually played in it) and multiple chiefs?

The Fifth Great Value: COURAGE

1. Is the courage of individuals heroically depicted as an individual choice and effort to give to one's people, or is it referred to as "fanatic, savage, massacre," etc.?
2. Are they humble in their exploits, never personally boasting?
3. Are they portrayed as stoic, not expressing emotion (unless around strangers), and perpetuating the always-serious stereotype?
4. Do they show a proper reverence for the gift of life?
5. Is there a distorted impression that non-Natives brought a "superior" civilization to the "inferior" Native Americans, thus demeaning Native cultures and omitting their achievements and contributions?

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Is the author(s) identified as a true Native American?
2. Is there evidence that the non-Native author(s) consulted a Native American?
3. Do the illustrations and/or photographs accurately reflect specific tribal/cultural traditions, symbols, and/or art forms?

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Question #	yes	no	n/a	Comments
V1-1				
V1-2				
V1-3				
V1-4				
V1-5				
V1-6				
V2-1				
V2-2				
V2-3				
V2-4				
V2-5				
V3-1				
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V3-15				
V4-1				
V4-2				
V4-3				
V5-1				
V5-2				
V5-3				
V5-4				
V5-5				
AC-1				
AC-2				
AC-3				

AUTHENTICITY EVALUATION:

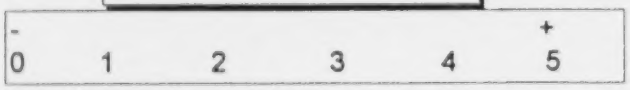

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Table 2- Alphabetized listing of trade books used in the sample

Baker, Olaf (1981). *Where the Buffaloes Begin.* New York: Puffin.

Bruchac, Joseph (1997). *Many Nations: An Alphabet of Native Americans.* New York: Bridgewater.

Cohlene, Terri (1990). *Turquoise Boy.* Vero Beach: Watermill Press.

de Paola, Tomie (1983). *The Legend of the Bluebonnet.* New York: G P. Putnam's Sons.

Farquhar, Margaret (1964). *Indian Children of America.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Freedman, Russell (1987). *Indian Chiefs.* New York: Holiday House.

Goble, Paul (1978). *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses.* New York: Bradbury Press.

Grossman, Virginia, and Long, Sylvia (1991). *Ten Little Rabbits.* San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Jones, Hettie (1971). *The Trees Stand Shining.* New York: Dial.

Martin, Jr., Bill, and Archambault, John (1987). *Knots on a Counting Rope.* New York: The Trumpet Club.

Miles, Miska (1971). *Annie and the Old One.* Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Osinski, Alice (1990). *The Tlingit.* Chicago: Children's Press.

Oughton, Jerrie (1992). *How the Stars Fell into the Sky.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Ross, Gayle (1996). *The Legend of the Windigo.* New York: Dial.

Schecter, Ellen (1992). *The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend.* New York: Bantam.

Scott, Ann (1996). *Brave as a Mountain Lion.* New York: Clarion.

Stroud, Virginia (1995). *A Walk to the Great Mystery.* New York: Dial.

Swamp, Chief Jake (1995). *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message.* New York: Lee & Low.

Steptoe, John (1984). *The Story of Jumping Mouse.* New York: Mulberry Books.

Tyrrell, Francis (1990). *The Huron Carol.* New York: Dutton.

Table 3- Ratings of the sample trade books (0-5)

Author/Date/Title	Rating
Cohlene (1990). *Turquoise Boy*	5
Osinski (1990). *The Tlingit*	5
Schecter (1992). *The Warrior Maiden: A Hopi Legend*	5
Scott (1996). *Brave as a Mountain Lion*	5
Stroud (1995). *A Walk to the Great Mystery*	5
Bruchac (1997). *Many Nations: An Alphabet of Native America*	4
Freedman (1987). *Indian Chiefs*	4
Swamp (1995). *Giving Thanks*	4
de Paola (1983). *The Legend of the Bluebonnet*	3
Goble (1978). *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*	3
Jones (1971). *The Trees Stand Shining*	3
Ross (1996). *The Legend of the Windigo*	3
Baker (1981). *Where the Buffaloes Begin*	2
Farquhar (1964). *Indian Children of America*	2
Miles (1971). *Annie and the Old One*	2
Oughton (1992). *How the Stars Fell into the Sky*	2
Steptoe (1984). *The Story of Jumping Mouse*	2
Martin & Archambault (1987). *Knots on a Counting Rope*	1
Grossman & Long (1991). *Ten Little Rabbits*	0
Tyrrell (1990). *The Huron Carol*	0